



US Department of Defense

Talking Points – Oct. 27, 2004 –Al Qaqaa Weapons Facility

Following are talking points on the 2003 timeline regarding U.S. and Iraqi military activities in the vicinity of the former Al-Qaqaa military facility.

- **According to the Duelfer report, as of mid-September 2004 Coalition forces have reviewed and cleared more than 10,000 caches of weapons.**
 - This includes 240,000 tons of munitions that have been destroyed and another 160,000 tons secured and awaiting destruction.
 - The 377 tons of munitions from the Al-Qaqaa facility is less than 1/10th of one percent of the 400,000 tons of total munitions Coalition forces have destroyed or have lined up to destroy.
- **On March 19, Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched.**
 - Shortly before that date the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had left Iraq.
 - The initial goal of Coalition forces was to collapse Saddam's regime and go after its command and control elements. This was done with an emphasis on speed in order to minimize the loss of life.
- **The 3-15th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division arrived as part of the Coalition push to Baghdad on April 3-4.**
 - Their mission was to secure the bridge crossing site so follow-on troops from the 3rd ID could continue to cross the bridge and move into Baghdad.
- **The Al-Qaqaa facility is one of dozens of ammunition storage points the 3rd Infantry Division encountered on its march toward Baghdad from the Iraq-Kuwait border.**
 - Former chief weapons inspector David Kay noted on Oct. 26, 2004, "The Iraqi behavior when they believed they were going to be attacked would be to empty the bunkers and scatter the material around the site."
 - U.S. troops reported hundreds of caches of weapons from Kuwait to Baghdad.
 - U.S. forces discovered dispersed weapons in countless locations, including schools, mosques and hospitals and even zoos.
- **When the U.S. forces arrived, the Al-Qaqaa facility was not secure.**
 - Fedayeen Saddam, Special Republican Guard and other Iraqi military units were at the facility defending it.
 - These enemies were firing from inside the facility. The 3-15th engaged them and found that the gates to the facility were open.
- **IAEA acknowledged in January 2003 that it could not account for 32 tons of HMX.**
 - The IAEA apparently accepted Saddam's contention that the missing explosives were used for industrial purposes.

- **Al-Qaqaa is a large industrial complex.**
 - Al-Qaqaa was just one of more than 900 designated sites of interest for post-hostilities WMD exploration.
 - The facility had streets that stretched city blocks, more than 80 buildings, and dozens of bunkers traditionally built to store weapons. There were six designated sensitive sites on the facility.
- **At Al-Qaqaa, the 2d Brigade uncovered ordnance, material believed to be possible biological or chemical agents, and other weapons-related material.**
 - The material was tested and found not to be biological or chemical agents.
- **The 2d Brigade commander was aware that following standard procedure, a follow-on unit of experts (the 75th Exploitation Task Force) would arrive to perform an inspection/analysis of the site.**
 - In fact, the 75th inspected the facility on May 8, May 11 and May 27 and reported no IAEA material. The facility had been looted and stripped and vandalized. The 75th recommend no further exploitation of the facility.
- **On April 6 the 3-15th battalion departed the facility.**
 - The 3-15th then joined the rest of the 2nd Brigade for the push to Baghdad.
- **On April 10 the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne (an NBC news team was embedded with the brigade) arrived at Al-Qaqaa, but stayed on the perimeter.**
 - The brigade halted their advance temporarily near the facility. They continued on their mission the next day.
 - While occupying their temporary position, the brigade only secured the immediate area around the unit. Soldiers found bombs and other munitions, but no chemical weapons in their immediate area.
- **To date, there is no evidence of any large-scale movement of explosives from the facility from April 6 when the 3-15th battalion departed to the arrival of the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne.**
 - The movement of 377 tons of heavy ordnance would have required dozens of heavy trucks and equipment moving along the same roadways as U.S. combat divisions occupied continually for weeks subsequent to the 3rd I.D.'s arrival at the facility.